CISCO-0650

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Certain bits of a packet, such as bits in the IP header of an IP packet, are used to
designate the type of service or Quality of Service (QoS) level to be afforded to the

5   packet as it passes through a data communications network. A user entitled to a certain
QoS level logs into a service selection gateway SSG. The SSG queries an authentication,
authorization and accounting (AAA) server in response to a log-in attempt by the user.
Upon authorization, the AAA server returns an access accept signal in addition to an
indication from the user's service profile (user profile) as to the QoS level to be afforded

10   the user. While the user is logged in, all packets are routed through the SSG. The SSG
sets the certain bits of the packet in accordance with the user's assigned QoS level so that
as the packets are routed through the data communications network, they are consistently
afforded the assigned Quality of Service level. In another aspect of the invention, on-
demand QoS may be provided by the SSG and accounted for by communications with the

15   AAA server.

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